1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1889) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

548- Not being sure of the day of his wife's return home,
591 he had not been anxious at her non-arrival, but had been spending the evening with a party of friends. A question had arisen regarding his bravery; and, to vindicate it, he had accepted a wager to go alone at midnight to the Bas Khan, and leave there a token of his visit. He had been searching for a safe place in which to leave this token, unawed by the ghastly missiles hurled at him, as he supposed, by some banditti who had taken up their abode in the khan.

583 Mr. Rich, when travelling in Kurdistan, met a
562- girl of the Bulbassi tribe who had killed with a spear
579 a Turk who insulted her. This young Amazon was dressed like a man, and served the chief, Fezullah Effendi, as his faithful henchman, accompanying him on all his expeditions. The women of this tribe are particularly hardy and intrepid. They sometimes take to the road as brigands, and unlucky is the trader or traveller who falls into their hands. For not content with robbing him, they strip him, excite him to make proposals to them, and then punish him for so doing with every species of mild torture which their lively imaginations can suggest, such as pinching, scratching, and scourging with thorns.

542 In the domestic circle the women are treated as
593 equals by the men, who are most affectionate in their relations with their parents, sisters, and children, and in the character of husbands most considerate, kind, and forbearing. As an illustration of this latter trait, and at the same time of manners generally among the sedentary Kurds, I cannot do better than give the following charming story.

1: Garrett B-4, 5 (ca. 1888) 1891
MA11 Hard MA11

The affair got wind, and it was everywhere reported that Sīdī of Bagīrō had found a treasure. The news finally reached the ears of the Pasha of Van, who sent for him and shut him up in the city prison, where he lay some time. He confessed the truth, and obtained his liberty only at the price of a quantity of gold, which he gave to the Pasha of Van. In short, Sīdī had to scatter his gold in all directions.

Sensible folks will, perhaps, doubt the truth of this story. It is, however, firmly believed in those districts, and often related, and, what is more, the descendants of Sīdī still live at Bagīrō in great prosperity. They have lands, mills, many a yoke of oxen and fine flocks, and they keep open house. One might say that it is a *tekkeh*,[1] for every one receives hospitality in this Armenian house; Moslems even are never repulsed, but welcomed with every mark of attention. From that time Sīdī became well known among the Kürds, who made great friends with him, and brought him presents of sheep. It sometimes happens that they are at feud with the inhabitants of Bagīrō, and commit robberies and depredations in that town, but they always spare the house of Sīdī, saying that it is as sacred as a *tekkeh*, and that not even an indifferent glance must enter it.

The following curious story has been preserved by the late Mr. Rich,[2] who took it down literally from the lips of the narrator, a tribesman of the Bohtān of Dersīmmans, without, as he says, adding to or

[1] Turkish monastery, where hospitality is generally exercised.
[2] Narrative, etc., vol. i. p. 190.

against this people and, in many instances, their ignorance or mendacity. This may be seen from one of the more recent examples: 114

> Some of them are farmers and shepherds, but most of them are robbers. If a Kurd has not killed six or seven men, he is not respected and considered worthy to live. My father once told me a story he heard from one of the Kurdish chiefs. He said he had a son who was very bashful, and this was considered quite a disgrace, for one of these chiefs is always made leader in case of war. It would also be impossible for him to marry one of the best girls unless he was a successful thief and robber. He carries with him a gun and a sword, and no matter how bloody or evil the deed he commits may be, it only adds respect and honor to his name.[1] [181]

The sanguine reputation is not wholly without reason. In 579 ●
older times the Kurdish chieftains were not above plundering expeditions from their mountains and in recent years have proven incorrigible revolutionists, for reasons which will be 669 648
considered in this study. This has not endeared them to their co-religionists among the Arabs, Iranians, and Turks. Secondly, many Kurds served in the Hamidiye, the irregular 707 648
bodies of reactionary troops organized by the Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid to crush incipient liberal and nationalistic movements in the tottering Ottoman Empire, and the Armenians and other Christians who suffered from their depredations, as well as missionaries and spokesmen in Europe, have been loud in their denunciation of the Kurdish nation as a whole. 579 [618]
Lastly, the blood feud and brigandage are well known in Kurdistan itself. The first is not concerned with outsiders, but acts to emphasize a bloodthirsty reputation, and the

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[1] Soane, 1913, p. 183.

second was the diversion of some of the chieftains at the expense of commercial travelers who, of course, had reason to complain of the tolls exacted from them. It is ridiculous, however, to suppose that the Kurds as a body are a race of murderers and thieves. 509

An investigation of Kurdish life, the first object of this study, has value, not simply because the people have so often been maligned, but for the reason that the ethnology of the Middle East, a field which has only recently begun to receive adequate attention must be built up from accurate, localized descriptions. If broader analyses of contemporary Islamic culture are to be undertaken, as well as historical studies, they demand a body of data which admits of verification, the work of observers whose motives are scientific, rather than the loose aggregation of anecdotes and generalizations one has to deal with at present. One may profitably study Kurdish life, because it has been almost untouched as far as primary observation is concerned and, as the culture of a non-Arab people whose language and background is Indo-European, an inquiry into the effect of Islam in modifying its formation would not be without regard. One may properly seek to present those elements which may be proven to be unique with the Kurds and those others which may be attributed to the influence of Islam and other peoples. It is convenient here to mention the recent monograph of E. R. Leach, Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz Kurds, which, with the exception of some studies made many years 121 184

conduct of lesser officials but also of the populace as a whole, he tends to keep in close informal touch with both of these. Similarly, he is the step in authority between a mudir of his qadha and the mutasarrif of Erbil and reports, taxes, recruits, and prisoners must pass through his hands. The same relationship described between mudir and qaimmaqam obtains between the latter and the mutasarrif, because the qaimmaqam must refer his own reports and problems to higher authority. Lastly, it has been intimated above that the qaimmaqam is referred to as an appeal for all sorts of requests. In the Arab Middle East the private citizen has two customary approaches to the initiation of governmental action, at the "bottom," as is usual in most European governments, or at the "top." If, for example, one desires a permit, the first approach would require the submission of a written request to a clerk from whom it is transmitted through chief clerk, mudir, and so on, until it reaches the proper authority, accumulating documents on its way. It would then be returned in reverse fashion. The other approach, often a perogative of higher social rank, the direct application to the highest available authority, is, of course, the more effective because it bears the signature of authorization at the outset. It follows that the qaimmaqam is constantly beset by those, either in their own interest or in that of some "client," wishing to bypass the normal paths of transmittal.

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Throughout their history the Kurds have suffered a

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distinction for robbery and bloodshed, and certainly a part of the usual income of the old chieftains was derived from the exaction of "tolls" or outright kidnapping, either of persons or of goods, just as revenge in a blood feud was one of their outstanding duties. The introduction of better roads and the adoption of modern equipment by police and army have, without question, lessened greatly the frequency of these things, and the contemporary brigand --they still occur--finds himself heavily outgunned. In spite of this unsavory reputation, particularly for revolt, the Kurdish minority of Iraq cannot be said to be the most lawless in the country, for the Muntafiq liwa, a "Marsh Arab" province, is frequently cited as the worst. Although the army may be called upon in exceptional cases, normally the prevention and detection of crime is the work of the police, and their direction within the qadha is charged to the qaimmaqam.

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Service with the police is quite popular among the poorest classes, particularly among those of the "Marsh Arab" provinces, because, although the pay is extremely small, it is accepted as a substitute for military service and, as a career, offers an escape from agricultural drudgery. Officers are attracted to serve just as they might be to the army or the civil service, and are commissioned after graduation from a special school. They are usually derived from poorer middle-class families and have had a secondary education. There is thus quite a social gap between an officer

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The town of Rowanduz, as has been noted, has a population of some 5,000 persons, the constitution of which shall be dealt with later. A town of this size qualifies as a municipality (Arabic, baladiya) and the qaimmaqam of Rowanduz occupies, in addition to his own office, that of rais baladiya, a position similar to that of an American mayor, save that it is appointive rather than elective. Normally the rais baladiya in Iraq has a headquarters, comparable to the American city hall, and a staff of his own, including a treasurer and other officials. In Rowanduz, however, there has not been any particular need for the institution of such a separate body, and "metropolitan" administrative requirements are met through qadha or district facilities.

The problems presented by town administration appear to be very slight. Public order is maintained by the qadha-police and minor violations of the civil code (few of the townspeople have recourse to "tribal law") as well as legal processes are handled directly by the judge. In comparison with the outlying districts, the town is relatively law-abiding, aside from a certain amount of juvenile pilfering. Quarrels among women are quite frequent, the cause most often a fight between their children. Such skirmishes begin with words ("prostitute" is a favorite), and degenerate to hair-pulling or an exchange of blows with kabkabe (a wooden sandal with a leather strap; in Arabic, qubqab or qabqab). The neighbors usually intervene, and rarely, if ever, does such a thing require official attention. Fighting between men is infrequent, but can become

dangerous if it reaches the point of knives. The blow 579 ●
with the closed fist is unknown in Rowanduz, and one
strikes with the open palm or wrestles. Sticks or [411]
khunjirs are the next favored weapons in such an exchange,
and it is considered shameful for a man to bite or scratch
like a woman. As in other Islamic communities, quarrels,
sometimes quite serious, are much more common during the
fast of Ramadan. Four violent exchanges were observed
between women on one day during Ramadan. However, there had [682]
been in 1951 no homicides in the town for a period of three
years. Criminals of a higher order are at present unknown. [674]
The last of them, Nuri Bawil Agha, who dabbled in brigandage,
smuggling, and blackmail, now suffers life imprisonment for [682]
the murder of Isma'il Beg. Nuri is said to have often
arranged the theft of goods from merchants, and then to
have sold them back to the owners for appropriate sums.

The office of the mukhtar, Ra'uf Effendi, in Rowanduz 622
is peculiar, for it does not seem to have an incisive
everyday definition. It is not elective, and a mukhtar
is selected by the government with the more or less tacit
consent of his fellows. His work, such as it is, con-
sists in acting in liaison between the people and the
rais baladiya (at present, the qaimmaqam) and, to a certain
extent, being a guarantee for their good conduct. He is
without police authority, but acts to mitigate minor
quarrels between townspeople, and, with the force of
public opinion, as some power to command. He stands be-
tween the people and the government, presenting the

Iraq, and that which is European. It need not be thought 291
that the Kurdish element is something wholly unique, for [178]
there is an abundance of evidence, for example, almost any
Persian miniature painting, to indicate that colourful dyes,
if not the styles themselves, had a greater province in
centuries gone by than are in evidence today, a change
bound up in the impoverishment of the area and coupled
with the impact of European civilization.

Turning first to the Kurdish townsman of Rowandus,
dressed in native clothing, the basic undergarment is a
pair of baggy, white cotton drawers, bound at the waist
by a draw-string, which fall a few inches below the knees.
A cotton undershirt may or may not be worn, and the next
mandatory item is a white cotton shirt without a collar,
closed at the neck by a series of round cloth buttons.
The salient characteristic of this shirt is its sleeve which
extends almost a foot beyond the wrist and is split to the
elbow. When a jacket is worn, this long end is turned
back and tied around the forearm, just below the elbow.
For washing, or for fighting, the two ends are tied to- [515]
gether behind the neck, drawing up the sleeves of both [579]
shirt and jacket above the elbows. A sleeveless vest,
of European style and fastened with a number of buttons,
is often worn over the shirt. Its fabric is either
identical with the jacket or of striped cotton, but it
is not exposed to view in outdoor attire.

The outer garments consist of trousers and jacket,

town, and have a certain amount of influence on its social life. An interesting phenomenon is to be observed here, for the officials and officers, who are far more European in certain respects than the Kurdish populace, are more illiberal in their concept of women, particularly in a rural setting in which gossip enjoys considerable power. Masculine friends of a Kurdish home might meet its mistress socially, but in Rowanduz the best friend of an official, no matter what his derivation or status, can visit a house regularly for a matter of years and never catch sight of the wife in question. Whenever these women appear on the streets they are closely veiled in black from head to toe, and are never seen uncovered by any save their husbands and other women. The young medical officer, trained in Lebanon and otherwise thoroughly cosmopolitan, was peculiarly adamant on this point. It must be noticed that under their veils these wives wear garments which are no different from those of their sisters in Europe or America. It is interesting to see one of them walking, shrouded completely in shapeless black, and in the ten or twelve inches between veil and ground to observe nylon stockings and fashionable high-heeled sandals.

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Many women go barefoot in their homes, and their footwear includes European models, some simple slippers, and the kabkabs. These last are smooth wooden clogs, raised slightly at the heels, with leather straps for the toes, and, after hair-pulling, are the favored weapons in a feminine brawl. Women of the villages or poorer families

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government personnel. It would be easy for an outsider to romanticize this situation, and this could not be far from wrong, for the Kurds do the same themselves. The chieftain is the summation of a peasant's ideals, a formidable warrior, unremitting in vengeance, generous in hospitality, and gallant in conduct. An aristocratic youth is educated to play this part. It would be difficult to find many peoples among whom the hero, so defined, has so extensive a daily role and so general and attentive an audience. A number of persons in the Rowanduz area, queried on this point, were unable to name more than one or two chieftains of the aristocratic group, perhaps two or three hundred men in all, who had not been imprisoned or exiled by the government at least once.

Safeguard, as in the case of revenge, is a matter of aristocratic honor. Formerly, anyone who wished to pass through a chieftain's territory was expected to put himself under the latter's protection, because, failing this, he became more or less fair game for bandits or, indeed, the chieftain himself. In past decades brigandage, like assassination, was something of a sport, and holding up a caravan was considered an amusing, as well as lucrative, occupation for the aristocracy. The luckless merchant could only apply to the chieftain for his goods which, in consideration of a fee, were "recovered" and returned to him. The easiest technique, of course, was to obtain right to passage at first, at the expense of a few gifts, and a number of the chieftain's men would be delegated as guards.

For the Kurds themselves, safeguard had a more important application. If a man was a member of a group engaged in a vendetta, and had to pass through dangerous territory, he could put himself under the protection of a neutral group whose men provided him with an escort and, should he be killed, was obligated to avenge his death just as if he had been one of its own. 484 579 629

Sanctuary is something of major importance among the Kurds. If a man had committed a crime, usually a murder, he could throw himself on the mercy of the nearest chieftain and the latter was bound by honor to protect him from his pursuers. Often the chieftain paid the <u>badalkhwin</u> or blood-money to the injured parties, although unrelated to them or to the criminal, as a generous gesture. Of greater interest, perhaps, the chieftain provided sanctuary for runaway lovers. If a youth and a maiden fell in love and their parents forbade the match, they sometimes fled together, and, if captured by their irate relatives, would be slain. It is said that the first thing for such fugitives to do is to have intercourse, so they cannot be separated except by death, for a woman who has lost her virginity out of wedlock must be killed by her kinsmen. If the pair were able to reach a chieftain, the latter now acted as a matchmaker. He sought out the parents of the girl, informed them that their daughter was under his protection, attempted to reconcile them to the marriage, by this time consummated, and often paid the dowry of the bride, again, as a matter 696 628 622 [583] 628 584 622 [684]

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Twice during the night, Hajji Mustafa makes a round of the streets, drumming loudly on his giant tambourine. At various points he stops and shouts, Salawat, salawat 'ala al-Nabi, "Prayers, prayers for the Prophet," and in between these stages he sings various songs in Kurdish of his own devising. These two parades are to inform people that they may arise and enjoy another meal before sunrise, but, inasmuch as Hajji Mustafa and the pack of dogs which follows him make a great uproar, there is a certain amount of discontent. "Curse Hajji," the investigator's landlord grumbled, as he rose from his bed in the courtyard. 785 796 [203] [533]

Four weeks of absolute fasting between sunrise and sunset are not without hardship, particularly for those who must continue to labor. It is considered improper to smoke on the streets, and only one tea-shop, carefully masked, is allowed to remain open during the day. A number of persons make no pretence of keeping the fast, although they do not demonstrate this fact in public, and others, beginning with good resolve, fall from grace after a number of days. It is interesting that Hajji Mustafa, the person who fires the evening gun and makes the nocturnal announcements, the "religious fanatic," for want of a better terms, did not feel bound by such restraints, considering that his extraordinary relationship with God absolved him from the ordinary demands of the faith. Quarrels and fights are more frequent during Ramadan than any other season of the year, and there are "secret eaters" [579]

people for burial, to perform circumcision, to fire the gun for Nawruz, to play the tambourine, to assist at ceremonies of all sorts, and to help people. I can cure illnesses by my own medicines. I have now left everything in this world which is bad, and have started my prayers. 159 792 [767]

Sayyid Hosani, of whom Hajji Mustafa speaks above, was one of the most distinguished residents of Rowanduz, although not a native of the town. He died some years ago, and his house is still pointed out. Sayyid Hosani was not directly concerned in the feud between Nuri Bawil Agha and Isma'il Beg, although he was an adherent of the latter, but was closely bound up with Kurdish revolutionary activities. He was a writer, and operated the first Kurdish press in Iraq. The investigator possesses a postage stamp of the "Government of Southern Kurdistan," printed by Sayyid Hosani for the short-lived "state" of Shaykh Mahmud. Sayyid Hosani was engaged in a number of enterprises, some of them questionable from the government's point of view, and Hajji Mustafa, although he neglected to mention the fact, was one of his men. Hajji Mustafa also failed to relate how, during the second World War, he and several other adventurers procured police uniforms and levied customs duties from lorries going from Iran to Iraq at a point several miles in advance of the real customs station. The drivers were surprised to have to pay their tolls a second time and there was an investigation, but Hajji Mustafa escaped indictment. This exceptional man, who, in the course of his life, had been a barber, government employee, highwayman, itinerant trader, merchant, muleteer, owner of a tea-shop, 159 [628] [669] [205] [579] [651] 159 463

The most productive comparisons would be with the Turks or the Persians, but, unfortunately, no such monographs are as yet available. To utilize the scanty and widely scattered materials on Turkish or Persian life would be at best haphazard. This study of Rowandux, with certain exceptions, stands by itself, in the belief that it will afford accurate data for the comparative treatments of the future.

Something of the content of Kurdish life, as observed in Rowandux, has been presented. It has been seen that the town dominates, partly in an administrative and partly in a commercial way, a large agricultural district. The bulk of the townspeople are merchants, craftsmen, and servants who depend for their livelihood on commerce with the villagers and the patronage of government personnel. The basis of the town's importance is both economic and political. Life within the household, the structure of society, and religion have been treated. What is perhaps of great importance is the ample demonstration that the Kurds are not savages devoid of culture, that they are not all "robbers" and need not "kill six or seven men" in order to be respected. With the exception of revolts and blood feuds, the district is relatively peaceful and normally one is rarely in danger of molestation. The old brigandage, carried on largely by the chieftains as a lucrative diversion, was directed against commercial travelers who could protect themselves from it by the simple expedient of making "gifts" in advance. A district population of some fifty thousand

could scarcely support itself by robbery alone. It is interesting that the Arab Bedouins, among whom the vendetta and brigandage are just as well marked, are not often accused of being a race of savages and criminals. The Bedouin, unlike the Kurd, has been romanticized rather than condemned by those who have had little experience with him. Kurdish life, to be sure, is not distinguished by its intellectual or artistic achievements, but, by the same token, neither is that of Medieval Scotland, Sicily, or Albania, mountainous regions inhabited by peoples of a similar temperament. The most interesting characteristic of Kurdish culture is the way in which it has been moulded by Islam, and, in this, it exhibits similarities to that of Islamic peoples everywhere. It is ample testimony to the character of Islam and to the force of its protagonists in the Kurdish mountains that the peculiarities which may have obtained in pagan Kurdish society or religion have been so thoroughly submerged into a standard pattern. Aside from minor deviations, one is able to discover little which strikes him as strange or anomalous.

The second object of this study has been the delineation of the impact of the modern state on Kurdish life, and it is necessary to discuss the conclusions reached in this respect in much greater detail than in the first. The Kurds have been subjected, particularly since the Arab conquests, to rulers of one sort or another, the last of whom were the Ottoman Turks, but this control was, for the most part, superficial. Ottoman administration in Kurdistan